

# HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT



In October 2000, the South African Cabinet appointed the HSRC as the official agency responsible for undertaking and providing Government with research support services in the field of human resources development (HRD). Shortly thereafter, the Department of Science and Technology awarded the HSRC a substantial ring-fenced grant over three years to undertake research work in the area of HRD, orientated largely towards the creation of an improved information and analysis infrastructure to support Government decision-making in the arena of HRD. The Research Programme on HRD was established in 2001 to meet these objectives.

There are now over 20 projects registered in this Research Programme, covering a wide array of topics relevant to HRD.

The HRD staff complement stood at 22 at the end of the financial year, including 9 researchers.

## Current and recent projects

The following research projects were completed in the 2002/03 financial year, and several new publications will be released in the 2003/04 financial year:

The new Further Education and Training (FET) policy framework emphasises preparation for the world of work for both school leavers and mature learners. HRD is currently completing a **dual curriculum mandate for FET colleges in a future South Africa**. This study focuses on current curriculum practices in FET colleges to identify factors that enable best practices in respect of intermediate "skilling" for employment and/or self-employment in a wide range of economic sectors. Ten FET campuses were studied as exemplars of best practice. The final report is currently under preparation. Two research monographs will be published, aimed at FET policy-makers and practitioners.

The HSRC began providing **monitoring and evaluation support to the Support to Education and Skills Development Project**, a major initiative in the FET college sector supported by the Danish Government. The project involves a three-year cycle of monitoring and evaluation of Danish support of education and skills development in selected FET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape provinces. A baseline study has just been completed by the HSRC. It is to be followed at six-monthly intervals by formative evaluations and by a summative evaluation. It is anticipated that this longitudinal study will offer the opportunity to draw valid empirical





conclusions about the nature of donor-supported organisational and curriculum change in the FET sector, as well as about issues of sustainability.

The project on **Student Choice Behaviour, Phase 2** sought to confirm the study choices of those Grade 12 learners who participated in the Phase 1 survey in 2001, and subsequently enrolled in higher education institutions in 2002. It also investigated the factors that had led learners either to enroll or not enroll in higher education. In late 2002 – one year after the Phase 1 survey was administered – 14% of respondents were repeating all or part of Grade 12, 22% were unemployed, 28% were employed (14% full-time), 4% were not economically active, and 55% were studying (46% full-time). While 73% of Grade 12 learners in the 2001 survey had indicated their intention of entering higher education within three years, only 23% enrolled in higher education institutions in 2002 – 21% in public and 2% in private institutions. The Phase 1 survey revealed that more learners wanted to study in technikons (61%) than in universities (39%); but in 2002 more learners enrolled in universities (60%) than in technikons (40%). Business, Commerce and Management Studies was the most popular field of study at both intention and enrolment stages (26% of aspirant students wanted to study in this field; 28% did so). Natural and

mathematical sciences attracted 20% of students (compared to the 10% who intended doing so). A monograph on Phase 2 of the project will be published in 2003.

The book project ***Shifting Understandings of Skill: Moving Beyond a Low Skills Regime in Post-apartheid South Africa*** analyses the prospects for a successful "upskilling" of a population whose paths of learning and work have been profoundly shaped by the imprint of apartheid. As the first major study of the current international debate on high skills in the African context, it serves as an important and original contribution to the international literature, as well as a major addition to the literature on South African education, training and development. This book reflects the range of historical and sociological analysis that the HSRC is bringing to bear on the skills development challenge of post-apartheid South Africa, married with contributions of senior staff from the University of Leicester's Centre for Labour Market Studies, an international centre of excellence in this field. Edited by Dr Simon McGrath, Dr Azeem Badroodien, Dr Andre Kraak and Lorna Unwin, this book will be published in late 2003.

In January 2003, the Department of Labour commissioned HRD, in association with the Bureau for Market Research from UNISA, to undertake a **national survey of current training**

practices in South African firms. This is the second time the HSRC has undertaken such a national survey for the Department of Labour, the first being in 2000. The aim of the 2003 survey is to analyse and track training trends in South African workplaces over time and to compare the data with the results of the 2000 survey. Information from the study will be used by the Department of Labour in its efforts to support and co-ordinate training and human resource development across the economy.

HRD's study into **public-private partnership in the provision of higher education in South Africa** enquires into the objectives behind partnerships between certain public higher education institutions and private higher institutions. The roles and responsibilities of institutions in these partnership arrangements are poorly understood. Thus, the study seeks to

provide analytical information on how partnerships between public higher education institutions and local private institutions contribute to higher education in South Africa more widely. A report is being compiled for the Ford Foundation, the funder of the project, and will be published as a monograph in October 2003.

HRD also undertook a quantitative study on **the nature of private post-school technical and vocational education and training (TVET)**, located within the FET band in South Africa. It provided information regarding the participants, location, ownership, programmes offered, and modes and forms of delivery of private TVET provision. This information has been either speculative or non-existent until now. Results show that the sector is responsible for serving a learner enrolment headcount of 706 884 learners for the 864 providers pre-registered with the Department of Education (DoE) in 2001. The sector is characterised by a majority black learner enrolment, with a large proportion of learners older than 25 and employed. A significant proportion of providers offer programmes in contact mode, which are of shorter duration than those of their public counterparts. Programmes are offered in areas that do not require excessive capital investment and infrastructure, i.e. in education, computer science and business studies. Significantly, while the sector is arguably responding to employer and user demand, the quality of these short, modular courses delivered by part-time personnel has not yet been determined. An occasional paper publishing the key results is due in late 2003.

The first comprehensive **survey of the South African independent schooling sector** was also undertaken. The aim of the survey was to establish the size and shape of the sector. Findings from the survey suggest major growth since 1994 and that there are significantly more schools and learners than estimated by some key sources. The survey dispels popular myths about the profile of the sector, for example, that it is predominantly white and elitist. More than half of all independent schools charge low to average school fees and white learners constitute less than 30% of all learners in the sector. The survey does, however, point out that there appears to be a two-tier system in the sector characterised by better-performing, more expensive and largely white independent schools, as opposed to less expensive and largely African independent schools with mixed performances. An occasional paper publishing the key results is due in late 2003.

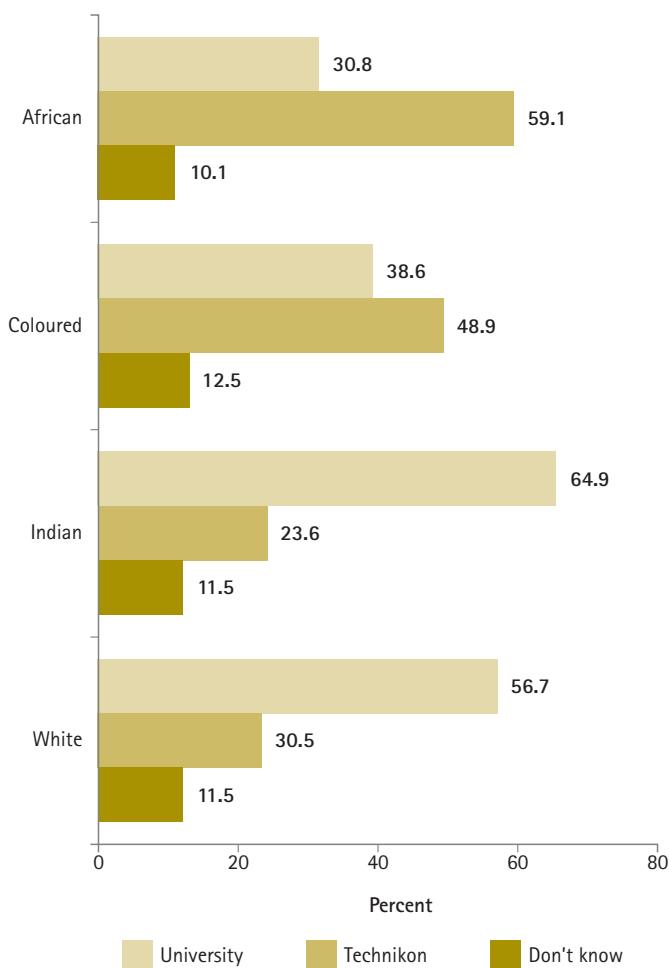


Figure C: Learner choice of institution type, by population group from the Student Choice Behaviour Study, Phase 1

### Future developments

A new project funded by the Parliamentary grant is a **tracer study of higher education graduates**. The project seeks to





ascertain throughput rates of selected higher education institutions as a measure of the higher education sector's efficiency. The study will survey the extent of employment rates of graduates, the extent of satisfaction of these graduates with their work situations, and the extent to which graduates perceive their higher education programmes to have sufficiently prepared them for the workplace. Four institutions will be selected: a private higher education institution; a technikon; an historically advantaged institution; and an historically disadvantaged institution. The survey results are due in March 2004. They will prove invaluable to the Department of Education, as it has identified the launching of pilot tracer studies in higher education as one of its key strategic objectives for 2003/04.

In December 2003, the HSRC will launch the **HRD Review 2003** and **HRD Data Warehouse**. This ongoing project, funded by the Department of Science and Technology, has two linked components. The first is the publication of the *HRD Review 2003*, which will provide Government and other decision-makers in

HRD with comprehensive analyses of key education and training, labour market and macro-economic indicators. A team of experts in the field was commissioned to write chapters for this publication. The chapters produced will cover both demand (education) and supply (employment) sides of the labour market as well as skills development, the national system of innovation, and industrial and technology policy. Second, the Data Warehouse website will contain every chapter from the HRD Review and all the statistical tables, primary data sets, and other documentation that authors assembled in writing their contributions to the *HRD Review 2003*. Over time, more content and links relevant to the field of HRD will be added to the Data Warehouse. This website infrastructure will be maintained by the HSRC and updated on a regular basis.

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### Executive Director Dr Andre Kraak

Tel: +27 12 302 2584

E-mail: [ahkraak@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:ahkraak@hsrc.ac.za)